

Speech Highlights

“In about 120 days the candidates will be asking South Carolina voters to set them on the path to the White House. Do they understand that more than one out of every three votes cast in South Carolina primaries last spring came from seniors? For the record – and the candidates’ contemplation – voters who were 65 and older accounted for 33.9% of the Republican primary ballots last spring and 31.2% of the Democratic ones.”

Lieutenant Governor Bauer laid out a list of issues, and asked presidential candidates to respond. He said he would place their specific responses right here on this website.

- **Early Social Security Impact**
Before our next president takes the oath of office in January 2009, the first of 78 million baby boomers will be turning 62 and applying for early retirement. They will turn 65 before the end of that first term.
- **Size of Baby Boomers**
Bauer said the 78 million baby boomers is an increase of almost 150% in the number of people who received Social Security Administration benefits in 2005.
- **Alzheimer's**
We now have almost 5 million people 65 and older with Alzheimer's and other dementias, and 70% live at home, cared for by family and friends. Direct and indirect costs of Alzheimer's now cost more than \$148 billion annually, but in less than a decade the Medicare portion alone is projected to be \$189 billion.
- **Elder Justice Act**
Which man or woman asking for our vote here in 2007 can promise us that he or she will stand with seniors in 2009? Who will declare that protection from exploitation, abuse and neglect should be the accepted norm? Who will ensure that those who prey on the frail, ill or elderly will suffer swift punishment? We have bipartisan support for an Elder Justice Act before the Congress of the United States– but we have no White House candidate demanding its immediate passage.

- Geriatrician Shortfall

One of South Carolina's most innovative efforts has been to create a geriatric loan forgiveness program which has resulted in 12 board certified geriatricians agreeing to accept forgiveness of medical school loans in return for coming here to treat our seniors. We have increased our state's number of geriatricians by one third. Still, the American Geriatrics Society says 36,000 more are needed nationally by 2030 to handle the baby boomers. Yet, each year America manages to certify only a little more than 300 geriatricians largely because the massive federal health programs that spend billions of dollars each year on senior medical care do not reward these critical skills.

- Caregiving

Aging is the single common experience of our diverse time. It touches us all in ways that we don't always anticipate. Our youngest baby boomers are building careers, and suddenly find themselves sandwiched between their care giving obligations to their aging parents and to their young children – while still working to establish their own secure future for retirement.